

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 12631

FROM THE CHARGE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM
SUBJ: WORLD CONFERENCE ON RACISM

REF: STATE 208509

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFTTEL, I CALLED ON AMBASSADOR
HILL OF JAMAICA AND AMBASSADOR KIBRIA OF BANGLADESH TO
REVIEW THE US POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE CONFERENCE
ON RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION.

2. WHILE NOTING THAT HIS DELEGATION WOULD DO EVERYTHING
POSSIBLE TO AVOID AN OUTCOME WHICH WOULD SPECIFICALLY
LINK ZIONISM TO RACISM, AMBASSADOR HILL (JAMAICA)
SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY REGRETTED VERY MUCH THE NON-
PARTICIPATION OF THE UNITED STATES. IN HIS VIEW, THE
UN IS A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM WHERE NATIONS COME TOGETHER
TO DISCUSS AND DEBATE ISSUES; NEITHER THE ISSUES THEM-
SELVES NOR THE SYSTEM IS ENHANCED WHEN ANY OF ITS
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MEMBERS REFUSE TO DEBATE. THIS IS PARTICULARLY
DEPLORABLE, HE SAID, IN THE CASE OF A GREAT COUNTRY LIKE
THE UNITED STATES WITH ITS DEMOCRATIC HERITAGE AND
TRADITIONS. IN HIS VIEW OUR NON-PARTICIPATION HAD
DAMAGED MOSTLY OURSELVES.

3. AMBASSADOR KIBRIA (BANGLADESH) IN HIS QUIET,

DIMINUTIVE WAY, NOTED THAT BANGLADESH WAS HARDLY IN A POSITION TO TAKE A FORCEFUL POSITION ON ANY ISSUE. HE SAID, HOWEVER, TO THE EXTENT THAT HIS DELEGATION COULD DO SO, THEY WOULD BE WORKING FOR MODERATION AND WOULD CERTAINLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT OUR CONCERNS AND VIEWS. HE GRASPED IMMEDIATELY THE POINT THAT NOTHING SHOULD BE DONE AT THE CONFERENCE WHICH WOULD DETRACT FROM THE PRESENT EFFORTS TO BRING THE ARABS AND ISRAELIS TOGETHER IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORT. THE DYNAMICS, HOWEVER, ARE WORKING AGAINST US HE FEARS. THE ISRAELIS THEMSELVES, BY THEIR DELIBERATE POLICY OF DEVELOPING AND ENHANCING A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH AFRICA, HAVE PLAYED INTO ARAB HANDS. EVEN AMONG MODERATE AFRICANS, WHO DO NOT WANT TO SEE THE MAIN THRUST OF THE CONFERENCE ALTERED OR ITS SUBSTANCE DILUTED, FIND IT DIFFICULT TO IGNORE AT LEAST THIS ASPECT OF ISRAELI ACTION WHICH MAKES IT, THEREFORE, THAT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO FEND OFF ARAB ARGUMENTS.

4. KIBRIA FELT THAT THE CRUCIAL DECISION WOULD BE MADE BY THE ARAB CAUCUS. IF MODERATE ARABS COULD PREVAIL IN THE ARAB CAUCUS SO AS TO AVOID A DIRECT LINK BETWEEN ZIONISM AND RACISM, THEN HE FELT CERTAIN THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM IN THE CONFERENCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF RADICAL ARAB OPINION PREVAILS AND THE ARAB

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CAUCUS FLOATS A DRAFT EXPLICITLY LINKING ZIONISM AND RACISM, THEN HE FELT THAT THE MOSLEM AND AFRICAN NATIONS THEMSELVES WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO OPPOSE SUCH A MOVE.

5. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE FOREGOING CALLS, WHICH I MADE BECAUSE I WAS PERSONALLY AND WELL-ACQUAINTED WITH THE PRINCIPALS, I WOULD URGE AGAINST SEEKING OUT THE GABONESE OR THE YEMENI REPRESENTATIVES HERE. IN MY JUDGMENT, WE HAVE SO FAR BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE BY WORKING DISCREETLY AND QUIETLY THROUGH OUR FRIENDS AMONG KEY G-77 COUNTRIES, OUR ALLIES IN WEO, AND OUR PERSONAL CONTACTS IN THE SECRETARIAT. AS A NON-PARTICIPANT IN THE CONFERENCE, I BELIEVE WE RISK PRESENTING OURSELVES MORE AS A LIGHTENING ROD THAN AN EFFECTIVE LOBBYIST IF WE BECOME TOO INDISCRIMINATE IN THE APPROACHES WE ARE MAKING. SORENSON

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